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## Great Lakes Surges in Forest Certification

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**Date: July 11, 2008**

The Great Lakes region (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ontario) holds 30 percent of North America's forest lands certified for sustainability, according to research commissioned by the Blandin Foundation and released today at a meeting of the Great Lakes Forest Alliance.

The study, conducted by a research team of Dovetail Partners (Minneapolis, Minn.) found that certifications through leading programs Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) in the region have "undergone another wave of growth, and further accomplishments are expected before the end of 2008."

According to Dovetail, some of the most significant growth has been achieved in the number of companies that hold FSC or SFI chain-of-custody certificates, which allow for manufacture and labeling of certified products.

"In just the past eight months, at least 120 more companies—a leap of 39 percent--in this region have achieved chain-of-custody certification to allow them to label and market certified products," said Kathryn Fernholz, executive director of Dovetail Partners and author of the report. Minnesota led this growth with a 56 percent increase.

By the end of the year, according to the report, the Great Lakes region also is likely to see 23% growth in certification of forest lands themselves, including a potential surge from Wisconsin of 3.5 million acres. As of June 2008, slightly more than 60 million acres in the Great Lakes region are certified through FSC and SFI.

"This is invigorating news," said Bernadine Joselyn, director of Public Policy and Engagement

for the Blandin Foundation. "With the continued growth of certification in the region, consumers can buy locally produced products from responsibly managed forests and help support progressive land management as well as our rural economies."

"The land owners and managers in this region continue to demonstrate a commitment to responsible forest management while being responsive to the demands of the marketplace," agreed Stefan Bergmann, executive director for the Great Lakes Forest Alliance, the collaboration between public and private forest owners and managers from the region.

Originally posted at: <http://www.grandmarais-mn.com/articles/2008/07/04/news/doc486cd21ce5373997027836.txt>

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